



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE AGENTS ARREST GUATEMALAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR *Violator linked to the civil patrol in Guatemala*

ORLANDO, Fla. — A 39-year-old Guatemalan human rights violator linked to the torture and killings of several Guatemalan civilians and guerilla members in the late 1980s was arrested here Friday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents.

Arrested was Justo Odilon Lucas-Mateo, who served with the civil patrol, a unit that has been implicated with serious human rights violations in Guatemala.

The Guatemalan army implemented the civil patrol to reduce the impact of rebel forces on the public.

An immigration judge found Mateo ineligible for any form of immigration relief Feb. 22, 2000 and ordered him removed from the United States after information was presented in court that proved that Mateo participated in the torture and killing of many civilians and guerilla members while he was a member of the patrol.

After the judge's ruling, Mateo went into hiding here until ICE agents captured him at his residence.

“This arrest illustrates ICE’s resolve for targeting criminals and restoring integrity to our immigration system,” said Raymond M. Connolly, special agent-in-charge for the Tampa office. “We will not relent until human rights violators are brought to justice and removed from our communities and our country.”

Mateo is in ICE custody awaiting removal from the country.

The criminal investigators of ICE’s Human Rights Violators Unit and the attorneys of its counterpart Human Rights Law Division are presently pursuing more than 200 cases.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.